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H

IS SURVEY OF THE HANDLING OF RAW INFORMATION

HEAVY REPORT ON RIAS

A. At the Agency Level

1. From the earliest days of centralized intelligence operations to the present there have been recurrent insistences that an agency which both collects its own intelligence and also evaluates that intelligence and the intelligence collected by other agencies will inevitably favor, or show bias for, the intelligence it collects. The most vehement example of this view is found in House Report No. 2734, 79th Congress, 2nd Session, "A Report of the Committee on Military Affairs," pursuant to House Resolution 20, which authorized the Committee to study the progress of the national war effort. This report, prepared by Peter Vischer, a war-alumnus of G-2, appeared on 17 December 1946, ten months after the NIA and CIG had been established by Executive Order and three months before hearings opened on the National Security Act of 1947. The National Intelligence Authority had promulgated NIA Directive No. 5, assigning CIG the performance of espionage and counter-espionage operations as a service of common concern; this assignment had understandably annoyed G-2 and solidified its objection to CIG's activities. The report includes the following:

"There are those who hold that one and the same organization cannot fairly both coordinate and operate, that the effect is akin to having one and the same man act as prosecutor and judge. The one who coordinates is in a sense a judge, an arbiter, who determines who shall do what. The minute he gets into operations himself he cannot, given normal human nature, make such a decision fairly: he would incline to giving himself, or his own organization, the best and most important assignments. And even if he did not take this natural course, his friendly competitors would be less than human if they did not think he had done so. The result is the same: is an already highly competitive, often dangerous occupation.

the beginning of distrust, a suspicion of unfair dealing

"A similar case could be made for one who would both evaluate and engage in operations. Let the time come when two reports, contradictory but of apparent equal truthfulness, appear. Which one would the evaluator believe? The one gathered by some intelligence agency other than his own? Or the one gathered by his own? Human nature would of course incline him toward the latter, regardless of other considerations...

"...It must be pointed out without further delay that if any agency that correlates and evaluates also permits itself to enter the field of secret intelligence,

a most unhealthy situation is likely to result. For in undertaking secret operations while at the same time correlating the efforts of other secret intelligence-gathering agencies, the advantage of secrecy is of course promptly lost. The central agency would have to be told what all the other "secret" agencies were doing in order to correlate their work. If the central agency were then to engage in operations of its own, it would without doubt tend to subject the existing "secret" agencies to compromise or disclosure, tend to nullify their usefulness, subject their agents to danger; it could not help but emphasize cutthroat competition in a field in which the description is more than a figure of speech."

2. This argument was brought before both the House and Senate committees considering the proposed National Security Act. Congress rejected the theory and incorporated in the Act without limitation the Executive Order language respecting the performance of "services of common concern." On 12 December 1947, the NSC issued NSCID-5, perpetuating in CIA the espionage and counter-espionage assignment given CIC by the NIA.

3. The charge of bias persists, but today it is more often mouthed by the uninformed than by members of the intelligence system. The latter have elevated their discussions to a joint attack on proper methods of coordinating and conducting secret operations (see proposed DCID-5/1). They have abandoned the approach suggested by the quotation above, largely because the intra-CIA and inter-IAC practices respecting the handling of information collected clandestinely have developed techniques to insure an absolute minimum of bias. For example, the customer evaluation program provides an opportunity for each using agency to evaluate the information CIA(FI) collects. Moreover, that part of CIA (OCI, and to a lesser extent OER, OSI, and ORE) which is a consumer of the FI product is so compartmented from FI that its evaluations of the FI product are actually free of any feeling that the evaluator is considering reports gathered by "his own" agency. If anything, the evaluating offices of CIA feel farther from, and are correspondingly more critical of, FI than are the military intelligence agencies or the R area of State.

4. It may confidently be said, therefore, that the charge of bias at the Agency level is unfounded and can be refuted to anyone who can be made to understand the methods by which CIA and the IAC agencies operate. The major important development has been that the intelligence community, while still nominally a group of independent coordinated agencies, is more and more divisible, on functional grounds, into collectors, producers, and disseminators. There is more affinity between the representatives of each group in all the agencies than between all the groups in any one agency.

B. At the Individual Collection Effort Level

1. The charge of bias cannot be as categorically refuted at this level as in the case of alleged Agency bias, treated above. Rivalry, enthusiasm, insufficient objectivity, competition for sources of information, and a variety of similar factors tend to produce bias within each of the individual collection programs with a resultant inability of the collectors to achieve totally objective self-criticism.

2. The major collection efforts to be considered are:

a. Espionage operations outside the U.S. and its possessions for the collection of foreign intelligence operations (conducted by the DCI (CIA/FI) by authority of NSCID-5, which also charges the DCI with coordinating covert intelligence collection activities with overt collection activities, described below).

b. Normal collection activities abroad (conducted under the coordinating responsibility of the senior U.S. representative in each foreign area, with Agency responsibility broadly allocated:

Cultural, political and sociological	- State
Military - Army
Naval - Navy
Air - Air
Economic, scientific, and technical	- Each agency
	in accordance with its needs
Basic sciences - State
NSCID-2 and DCID 2/1, and NSCID-10)	

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c. Communications Intelligence (a joint enterprise, NSCID-9).

3. Each of these activities is naturally operated by administrators whose goals are to make their particular program as usefully productive as possible. Healthy enthusiasm for a particular program is a natural attribute of those charged with operating that program. Each operator is acutely aware of the peculiar difficulties his program must surmount and is proud of whatever success is attained. As a result clandestine operators become over-enchanted of their sources, overt collectors feel their achievements vastly excel those of covert programs, and all-source devotees believe less than an all-source treatment to be but a limited approach to any intelligence problem.

4. The checks on bias in this situation must come from supervisory control of subordinate collectors and from professional intelligence research based on the take from all programs. If superior collection administrators fail to view their inferiors work critically and objectively and if researchers neglect the take from any program and favor others, biased results are inevitable. Current supervisory direction of individual programs still leave something to be desired in this connection, although such techniques as the intelligence audit in DD/P and the group evaluation have helped considerably. Similarly, research techniques are not yet entirely satisfactory, although the growth in numbers of all-source researchers and research programs is encouraging.

5. In these circumstances, the area of coordination perhaps offers the single most profitable source of improvement. It has long been evident that U.S. senior representatives are only partially and unevenly implementing the commands of NSCID-2, despite the best efforts of the Department of State and the Foreign Service. Similarly, the DCI's representatives are recognized to have achieved only partially the NSCID-5 injunction to coordinate covert and overt intelligence collection activities. Better efforts are needed both at Headquarters and in the field. The principle current relevant Headquarters activities are the inter-agency consideration of proposed DCID 5/1 and the IAC/ONE review of NSCID-4 and DCID's 4/1 and 4/2. It is recommended:

That, on completion of these two current tasks early in 1955, a team of representatives from the principal IAC agencies (CIA, State, and the three Services) visit selected foreign posts to survey the coordination of collection activities and develop recommendations for improvement. The CIA delegation should include members of FI, [REDACTED] OCI, and Mr. Bissell's staff.

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